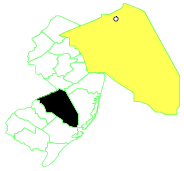
ROEBLING STEEL CO.

NEW JERSEY

EPA ID# NJD982281115



EPA REGION 2
CONGRESSIONAL DIST. 04
Burlington County
Florence

Other Names:
John A. Roebling Steel Co.
JARSCO

Site Description

The Roebling Steel Company site occupies a 200-acre former manufacturing plant for steel and wire products, located next to the Delaware River in Florence Township. The Roebling Steel Company produced steel wire and cable at this site for many years before closing in the 1980's. More recently, portions of the site were used for housing polymer reclamation operations, storing insulating products, refurbishing refrigerated trailers and shipping containers, and construction equipment storage. The raw materials and waste products that these operations produced were stored or buried in several on-site locations. Seventy buildings occupied much of the site, and were connected by a series of paved and unpaved roads. The site includes two inactive sludge lagoons, an abandoned landfill, contaminated soils, storage tanks containing hazardous materials, buildings containing pits and sumps, a network of underground piping containing liquids and sludges, and loose friable asbestos insulation. Sporadic vandalism has occurred since the plant stopped operations; several buildings have been partially destroyed, a pile of old tires was set on fire, and a building housing a chemical laboratory was destroyed by fire. The site is next to the Delaware River, and the groundwater under it is only about 10 feet below the ground surface. Approximately 12,000 people in the area depend on the groundwater for their drinking water, supplied by private and municipal wells within 3 miles of the site. The distance from the site to the nearest residential well is 2,000 feet. Residents in the area use the Delaware River and a wetland next to the site for recreation.

Site Responsibility: This site is being addressed through Federal actions.

NPL LISTING HISTORY
Proposed Date: 12/01/82
Final Date: 09/01/83

Threats and Contaminants

Buildings on the site contained contaminated process dust and exposed asbestos. Ground water under the site is contaminated with various heavy metals including chromium, lead, cadmium, nickel, zinc, and copper. Soil all around the site is contaminated with heavy metals, including lead. River and creek sediments are potentially contaminated with heavy metals and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons. People on-site could come

into direct contact with hazardous materials or could accidentally inhale contaminants from the soil, process dust in the buildings, tank and pit contents, and exposed asbestos. Runoff from precipitation on the site may have contaminated the Delaware River, which is next to the site.

Cleanup Approach

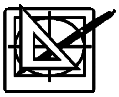
The site is being addressed in stages: initial actions and two long-term remedial phases have been completed, a third remedial phase is under design and a fourth remedial phase is under construction. Additional remedial work will be determined after completion of further feasibility study work.

Response Action Status

Initial Actions: In December 1985, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection packaged and removed picric acid and other chemicals found in the labs and shipped them to an approved treatment facility. In October 1987, EPA undertook a major removal action at the site. This action included the removal of lab pack containers and drums containing corrosive and toxic materials, acid tanks, and compressed gas cylinders. EPA conducted another removal action in October 1990, that included fencing a portion of the slag area and excavating contaminated soil from the Northwest Park. In October 1998, EPA began a site-wide removal action for asbestos mitigation from approximately 70 abandoned buildings and exterior piping located throughout the site. The asbestos mitigation was completed in November 1999.

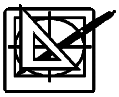
First Remedial Action: In March 1990, in a first Record of Decision (ROD), EPA selected a remedy to address the remaining high hazard sources of contamination, such as transformers contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls, baghouse dust and chemical piles, additional drums and tanks, tires, and contaminated soils from the adjacent Roebling Park playground. This remedial action was completed in September 1991.

Second Remedial Action: In September 1991, a second ROD was signed by EPA. A cleanup plan was selected for parts of the Southeast Park, which is adjacent to the steel plant. Excavation and disposal of contaminated soil, and revegetation of these areas, was completed in October 1994.



Third Remedial Action: As part of the 1991 ROD, EPA selected a cleanup plan for a 34-acre slag area, which includes treating hot spots of contamination, and then covering the entire 34-acre slag area with a soil cover and vegetation. The technical design for the slag area has become more complex than anticipated and is still ongoing. Pre-design

studies to locate and delineate areas that need treatment (hot spots) in the slag area, shoreline sampling, and a groundwater investigation, were completed in November 1994. Preparation of design plans and specifications for the slag area was initiated in June 1995. Additional field studies to determine any adverse ecological effects on the Delaware River were also completed in the summer of 1996. Resolution of ongoing issues related to the treatment of hotspots and the impact of the slag material on the surface and ground waters will be addressed in a ROD amendment scheduled by the Fall of 2002. Completion of the remedial design is anticipated in the Fall of 2002. EPA restricted access to the slag disposal area by installing a fence in October 1990, a temporary measure until EPA completes the final remediation of this area.



Fourth Remedial Action: In September 1996, the third ROD was signed by EPA. EPA selected a remedy which includes removal and disposal of the contents from underground storage tanks and underground piping, asbestos abatement, decontamination and demolition of buildings, recycling or disposal of scrap metal from building debris and contaminated equipment, and the off-site disposal of process dust and the contents of above-ground tanks, pits, and sumps. EPA began designing the cleanup of the building structures and the remaining contamination sources in the summer of 1997. The decontamination and demolition of designated buildings began in June 1999 and is currently on-going. Lastly, mitigation has been completed at eleven underground storage tanks (USTs).

Remaining Contamination: A comprehensive study was initiated to address area-wide contaminated surface and subsurface soils, a landfill, two sludge lagoons, river and creek sediments, and ground water. EPA has completed the supplemental field work, which will support a remedial investigation and feasibility study for the final ROD. EPA anticipates the completion of this ROD by the Fall of 2002.

Enforcement Progress

In October 1992, the Department of Justice (DOJ), on behalf of EPA, reached a settlement with a former owner and operator of the site for a small portion of the site cleanup costs, as part of Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceedings. EPA is conducting further enforcement activities which may lead to the identification of additional potentially responsible parties.

Cleanup Progress  ***(Threat Mitigated by Physical Clean-up Work)***

EPA has already completed major removal actions at the Roebling Steel Company site, thereby significantly reducing the potential for exposure to hazardous materials on or off the site. Other actions to remove the remaining contaminated materials at the site will be undertaken in phases over the next few years.

A major removal action was conducted between October 1987 and November 1988. Approximately 300 lab pack containers of chemicals were collected and properly disposed. Approximately 3,200 full and empty drums were sampled and disposed of at federally permitted facilities, and 120 cubic yards of crushed and emptied drums were removed to an EPA-approved hazardous waste landfill. Three pounds of metallic mercury were collected, repackaged, and sent to a recycling facility for distillation and reuse. Over 35 tons of baghouse dust were secured with tarps and barriers. One

drum of hazardous waste-containing cyanide was shipped to an approved treatment facility, and 10 compressed gas cylinders were returned to manufacturers for proper reuse and recycling or were treated on site. Approximately 3,000 gallons of sulfuric acid and 2,150 gallons of phosphoric acid were sampled, analyzed, and removed from two large above ground tanks and sent off site for reuse; 239,000 pounds of base neutral solids in drums were consolidated and shipped to a permitted facility. Exposed asbestos in a potential personnel entry zone was wrapped and contained.

The first remedial action continued the removal of contaminated source areas. The total quantity of material removed off-site for treatment, disposal, and/or recycling was the following: 263 overpacked drums and 663 crushed drums; 45,864 gallons of transformer oil and 860,709 pounds of transformer carcasses; 266,843 gallons of tank liquids and 1,351 tons of tank sludges; 800 tons of baghouse dust; 251 tons of chemical piles and asbestos; 126 tons of burnt tires; and 261 tons of recyclable tires.

Approximately 780 cubic yards of contaminated soil was excavated from two parks bordering the southern edge of the site. A perimeter fence and security guards are maintained to restrict access to the site.

An asbestos abatement action was completed in November 1999. Approximately 91,592 linear feet of friable asbestos found within on-site buildings and exterior piping have been removed.

Construction activities associated with the buildings started in July 1999. Site work completed thus far includes demolition of 25 buildings, mitigation of 11 underground storage tanks and four above-ground oil storage tanks. Site work continues on gross decontamination of 16 buildings, removal of underground oil transport lines and chemical lines, segregating demolition debris, recycling steel debris, and disposal of all wastes generated as a result of construction activities. This remedial action is still ongoing.

EPA is considering prospective purchaser agreements (PPA) with potential investors or developers to undertake economic redevelopment activities at the site without assuming potential liability for site cleanup costs. Reuse and development of the contaminated Roebling property would have substantial benefits to the local community. EPA is currently negotiating a PPA with New Jersey Transit for the construction of a light rail commuter station stop at the Roebling site.

Finally, as part of EPA's Superfund Sites Redevelopment Initiative, EPA awarded Burlington County a $100,000 grant in September 1999 to enable the County, in consultation with local officials, to hire a consultant to develop a reuse assessment for the site. This reuse assessment was completed in January 2002 and was developed in the context of EPA's planned and anticipated remediation work at the site.

Site Repository

Florence Township Public Library
1350 Hornberger Avenue
Roebling, New Jersey 08554
(609)499-0143

Florence Township Municipal Bldg.
711 Broad Street
Florence, New Jersey 08518
(609) 499-2525